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An Introduction to Music Studies edited by
J. P. E. Harper-Scott and Jim Samson.
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9780521603805.

'Why study music?' asks the blurb on the back of this book. A quick straw poll among my own first-year students produced a unanimous response: because they love it, because they want to know more about it and want to deepen their knowledge of it, and because they want more musical experience, with the ultimate aim of getting a job that (usually) relates in some way to the subject. The answer given by J. P. E. Harper-Scott and Jim Sansom in this *Introduction to Music Studies* is rather different. According to the Preface, the book is aimed at first-year undergraduates and A-Level students 'who need an overview of the field'. These aspiring musicians are informed (p. 1) that the study of music has become 'less a focus for the rigorous intellectual scrutiny of the history and artefacts of civilizations, and more a site for the development of competencies for the post-university workplace'. Fortunately, most university teachers and students value the excitement and emotional power of music – and the insights gained from studying it and discovering it – more highly than the 'development of competencies', which sounds more like one of the objectives for an accountancy course.

Entirely written by academics who are (or were) at Royal Holloway, University of London, the use of American spellings suggests that the publishers are aiming for an international readership. By drawing on the interests of one department, the coverage of the subject inevitably reflects the curriculum of that institution. There are some obvious omissions: nothing on the study of music and education, on music therapy, on the history

of recording, on the value of aural and listening skills, or on other aspects of practical musicianship such as simple keyboard harmony (pretty much essential for any student intending to go into school teaching).

This is a textbook, with chapter previews and summaries, lists of 'key issues', lots of things in boxes, discussion points, glossaries and so on. The design makes navigation straightforward, though some of the definitions offered in the glossaries are anything but that. Jargon is used with almost perverse delight at times: trendy plurals abound ('temporalities', 'sociologies', 'musics'), and some of the chapters would certainly earn certification for what we might call buzzword compliance. A glance at the glossaries provides more evidence: 'Appropriation' and 'Essentialism' (p. 58), 'Cognitive representation' (p. 77), and so on. Fortunately, this gruesome vocabulary has not become part of the mainstream discourse for musical study, nor does it obscure the best chapters in this book.

Part 1 covers five chapters on 'Disciplines'. In the first, Jim Samson examines why and how music history is studied. The discussion of the (changing) reception of Beethoven's *Eroica* is persuasive, and the example of the genesis and publication of Chopin's nocturnes is brief but fascinating. Samson makes a good case for the need to be careful in using terms like Romanticism, and his point about broadening the geographical horizons of music-historical investigation is compelling. I have a jargon-related quibble with the Chapter Summary (p. 21): 'Music historians', we are told, construct narratives based on 'geographies and temporalities'. What is wrong with 'times and places'?

Rachel Beckles Wilson tackles 'Music Theory and Analysis' with wit and lucidity. I enjoyed the sections on the value of analysis to performers and listeners, as well as her

clear account of what Tovey, Schenker, R ti and others set out to demonstrate. Some of the writing on more recent theory may be harder to grasp, and it would be a mistake for any prospective undergraduate to assume that they will be confronted in an analysis class with the likes of the spectrogram of the 'Ride of the Valkyries' (p. 38). Beckles Wilson asserts that 'Schenker and R ti cannot both be right about how Beethoven worked' (p. 27), but could it not be argued that each was seeking to reveal different aspects of his composing method?

Katharine Ellis writes on 'The sociology of music' – defined as 'the relationships between music and the people who produce, perform and use it'. I longed for a case study here to demonstrate why this can be such a productive area of study, but instead the chapter covers concepts: 'Sociologies of music', 'The problem of "high art"', 'Cultural capital', and so on. This is an area that will be of interest to some music students, and the same is certainly true of 'The psychology of music', John Rink's chapter. The sections here on 'The musical mind', and on how we learn and create music are useful summaries, but the author faces a daunting challenge when trying to describe 'What is expressed in music and how do we perceive it' in just over a page. Even so, Rink manages to pose some important questions, and to open a discussion of what musical expression is (p. 72), and to provide some useful pointers. Andrew Bowie introduces 'Musical aesthetics and critical theory'. He does so with an admirably clear-sighted account of the ideas proposed by some of the leading 19th- and 20th-century thinkers in this area, expounds the essence of Adorno's approach to music more lucidly than it perhaps deserves, and provides a succinct account of the 'new musicology', citing at least one extreme example to demonstrate its potential pitfalls.

Part 2 covers 'Approaches to repertoire'. In the 'World Musics' chapter, Henry Stobart is surely right to stress that ethnomusicology 'has the potential of opening up a wealth of new perspectives on the world', but sounds unduly defensive when he claims that 'if you would rather keep your head buried firmly in the sand, then it is probably not an area you should pursue'. Music students are inspired by all sorts of music – anything from Hindustani ragas (p. 111) to Hildegard, Hindemith or Jennifer Higdon. Pursuing one of those interests in preference to another is not the sign of a closed mind, but the result of following a particular enthusiasm.

Stephen Rose writes on 'Early Music', broadening the term to include historically informed performance of any music. His approach is undogmatic and his examples are well chosen – when describing some of the problems of notation, he takes Corelli's Op. 5 Violin Sonatas and Handel's Organ Concertos. Had space permitted, Rose could maybe have mentioned a few more recent examples related to performance practice (ornamentation in Mozart perhaps, or the evidence of early recordings), but this is an interesting and lucid outline of some important questions.

David Charlton's chapter on opera is eloquently argued. His delightful 'camel' analogy for opera emphasises that collaborative work involves a high percentage of duds that don't 'work properly together' – which is fair enough, except that students are much more likely to study ones that do. I'm a little baffled by Charlton's claim in his closing paragraph that 'productions cannot be right or wrong' (p. 150). Apologists for Director's opera will be delighted to read this, but anyone who has experienced its worst excesses will have ghastly memories of productions that defy both the spirit and the letter of the work. All I miss from this chapter is some discussion of

operatic source studies – a field in which Charlton is an internationally distinguished scholar.

‘Concert music’ – the non-operatic core of Western orchestral, vocal and chamber music written since the 17th century – is the preserve of Erik Levi. He has valuable things to say about the way concerts evolved, as well as exploring the idea of ‘a vibrant concert life as an important status symbol’ in large cities. A brief overview of major genres – oratorio, symphony, concerto, string quartet and so on – is followed by a concise discussion of the 20th century – including the impact of radio and recordings. As with the opera chapter, I sense that the author was longing to say more about specific pieces rather than general issues.

Andrew Bowie’s second contribution to this book is on ‘Jazz’. While he succeeded in clarifying complex and difficult ideas in his chapter on aesthetics, here arguments tend to become obscure. The chapter begins by exploring ‘the contentious nature’ of jazz – rather than the sound of it. Bowie tells us that much of the writing on jazz ‘has tended towards the merely anecdotal’ (p. 179), but the two books by Gunther Schuller listed in ‘further reading’ include some of the most musically insightful writing on the subject. It’s puzzling that Schuller’s work isn’t discussed in the text.

Elizabeth Eva Leach makes a coherent case for the academic study of popular music, though Fig. 11.1 (p. 191) raises danger signals. I think it is trying to demonstrate that a song is (a) composed and written, (b) performed and published, and (c) subsequently heard or read. This illustration is loftily entitled ‘Semiotic fields or zones of inquiry in popular music’ (‘Production’, ‘Text’ and ‘Reception’) and refers to ‘Negotiations of meaning’, and a ‘Feedback loop ([that] allows market-led production)’. Am I alone in finding this needlessly

complicated and wordy? The section ‘How do we study popular music’ has more on ‘Approaches from outside musicology’ than on ‘Musicological study’. Adorno is given an easy ride, as is the tendency towards music-free discussion of popular music. I would have welcomed more on how popular music might be looked at from an explicitly musical perspective, in ways that engaged the musical skills of students – studying arrangements, or harmonic language, or the value of source studies that reveal something of a song’s genesis.

The chapter on ‘Music in film and television’ by Julie Brown sets out to trace ‘some of the issues that film and television present to musicologists’. It does so admirably, using a case study of a sequence from *Blade Runner* as a reference point, introducing specialist language in a context that makes it relevant and necessary, and moving on to a discussion of sources, and the purpose of studying music for film and television – helpfully referring back to the case study in order to orientate the discussion.

‘Musical performance’ is considered by Tina K. Ramnarine. Much of this relates to performance traditions that may be outside the experience of the target readership – the aesthetics of calypso, a folk fiddle convention in Nova Scotia, and the traditional song genre of the Saami – while the paragraph on ‘Studying performance in higher education’ is just 13 lines long. This chapter could have considered the musical and interpretative challenges faced by undergraduate performers seeking to develop their talents, especially some of the ways that can also relate performing to parallel studies in musicology.

Julian Johnson’s chapter on ‘Composition’ is outstanding – a brilliantly cogent and concise discussion of what is involved in the study of composition.

Johnson considers the necessity of acquiring an understanding of techniques (both modern and older), the question of style, the problems and shortcomings of notation, and the challenge of finding something original to express in the 21st century, and the processes involved in the act of composition. In the next chapter, Brian Lock – another composer – writes about ‘Music Technology’. This is a difficult assignment given the speed with which technology continues to evolve, but Lock has produced a clear and useful introduction to the intelligent application of technology to different aspects of musical study, especially composition and recording.

The final chapter is Nicholas Cook’s ‘The economics and business of music’. It begins with a thought-provoking case study: Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. There’s an illustration of music written at the start of Beethoven’s career, the Op. 1 piano trios published by Artaria in 1795, chosen to make some points about why Prince Lichnowsky’s name is prominent on the title page. The caption for this plate raises an intriguing issue: while it’s true that the title page is in French because this was the accepted language of Europe’s cultured classes at the time, I wonder about the second half of the caption: ‘if it had been in German, sales would have been lower’. Are there *any* examples of German-language title pages for chamber music from major publishers in Leipzig or Vienna at the time – let alone one where slow sales can be attributed to the language used? Cook’s chapter moves on to a discussion of issues such as copyright and performing rights, and then considers the current state of Classical music ‘in the marketplace’. His conclusions are convincingly argued – realistic rather than idealistic, but mercifully free of the dismal spin that often characterises discussions on the ‘future’ of classical music.

There are certainly good things in this book, but there’s sometimes a tendency to rather prescriptive thinking, an occasional over-reliance on gobbledegook (when clarity of expression is surely one of the things any university teacher tries to inculcate in her or his students), and an approach to the question of why we study music at all that tends to emphasise the utilitarian and the methodological, rather than the thrill of discovery that leads students to deeper forms of enquiry.

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The Biology of Musical Performance and

Performance-Related Injury by Alan H. D. Watson. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009. Paperback, 369 pp. + CD, £34.95. ISBN: 9780810863590.

The awareness of musicians’ health and wellbeing is changing. Within the UK, this is aided by schemes such as the *Healthy Orchestra Charter* and the *Sound Ear Initiative*. Musician-specific treatment centres and national organisations are also emerging in many countries within Europe and North America, promoting and developing this work. Additionally, an increasing number of institutions and centres are actively involved in researching the physicality and psychology of musical performance, as a means of improving and informing musicians’ health and wellbeing.

It is in response to this that Alan Watson has written *The Biology of Musical Performance*. In the introduction, Watson suggests that while there is a considerable body of knowledge on the physical processes involved in musical performance, this